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Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4357th meeting

Monday, 20 August 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Issouf Oumar Maiga
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-51566 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cuba, Cyprus, Lebanon and Namibia in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Kasoulides (Cyprus), Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon) and Mr. Andjaba (Namibia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 August 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request the Security Council to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Ali A. Abbas, Deputy Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 20 August 2001, on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

This letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under symbol S/2001/801.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Abbas.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Goussous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting at the request of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. I should also like to congratulate you wholeheartedly on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am profoundly convinced that, thanks to your experience and skill, the work of the Council will be successful.

I should also like to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Wang Yingfan, for having conducted the business of the Council with such brilliance during the course of the previous month.

My country, Jordan, greatly appreciates the laudable efforts by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. We thank him for his wise guidance and for always trying to seek to implement the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We thank him for the tireless efforts he has made in the service of international peace and security.

My delegation is highly concerned about the serious developments in the occupied Palestinian territories resulting from continued acts of aggression by Israel against the Palestinian people. These acts are now posing a very grave threat. My delegation condemns Israel for waging an increasing military campaign against the Palestinian people, for using collective punishment against the Palestinians and for using combat aircraft and tanks to destroy Palestinian villages and institutions. This has led to a high number of casualties among innocent civilians. The policy of assassination that is under way, the demolition of houses and the economic and security siege of Palestine towns and villages are flagrant violations of international agreements and of relevant international laws and norms.

We once again condemn the Israeli policy and Israel's invasion and occupation of areas that are under full Palestinian authority. The two sides had agreed to consider the issue of Jerusalem during the final-status negotiations. The occupation of houses is a flagrant violation of international law and of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, inter alia, 252 (1969) and 672 (1990), which consider Israel's occupation and annexation of Jerusalem null and void.

Jordan firmly believes that the policy being pursued by the Israeli Government cannot provide security to the Israeli people. On the contrary, this policy will lead to more violence and to more victims. Rather than leading to regional peace and security, it

will threaten the future of the peace process. The regrettable recent attack in Jerusalem that caused many victims, including civilians, shows that security measures, however robust, cannot deter extremist groups from committing acts of aggression. Therefore, the only way to provide security is to deal with the problems facing the fact that the peace process and to resume negotiations between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides.

We are fully aware of the fact that the military option is not a solution to the crisis and that to deal with this crisis only from a security point of view will not resolve it and will only increase violence. This could ignite the entire region. Therefore Jordan believes that a political solution is the only way to resolve the crisis.

In this context, we appeal to the Israeli Government to respond favourably to international efforts to put an end to the acts of aggression and siege against the Palestinians. We encourage the Israeli Government to return to the negotiating table on the basis of the agreements that provided the foundations for the peace process.

We believe that the report of the Mitchell Fact-Finding Committee and the recommendations contained in it provide a way to resolve this crisis, to restore trust between the two parties through the implementation of all the commitments undertaken and by resuming negotiations where they were left off. The objective here is to reach a final agreement, put an end to occupation, restore rights and enable all to live in peace and security in accordance with the international resolutions that form the basis for the peace process.

My delegation once again reiterates its appeal to the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter by sending international observers to the occupied Palestinian territories, in accordance with the recommendations of the G-8 in Genoa, Italy, and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee. The objective here is to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people in accordance with the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We also appeal to the Security Council to urge Israel to implement international resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which formed the basis for the peace process. Israel should also be urged to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to create their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms the solidarity of our King, our Government and our people with the Palestinian people. We want to see to it that the Palestinian people enjoy their legitimate rights, and that they meet all their legitimate demands to create an independent State comprising all of their national territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me to speak today on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which is headed by the Sudan this month, and to convey to you, Sir, our congratulations on your succession to the presidency of the Security Council. I would like once again to convey my congratulations to the Chinese delegation for the masterful way in which it conducted the Council's deliberations last month.

Barely a few months have elapsed since the Security Council last met to review the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Since that time the situation has worsened in a most disturbing manner. We had hoped that the international community represented in the Security Council would have been able to halt the organized murder of Palestinians by Israel by providing urgent, international protection from the war crimes being committed against civilians as part of an official Israeli policy. However, the Security Council has stood idly by while television screens around the world showed us the spectacle of an occupying Power persisting in using military force and perpetrating systematic acts of killing against innocent, defenceless civilians.

The Israelis have increased the isolation of Palestinian towns and villages by besieging them with tanks and heavy war machinery. The occupying Power has used combat aircraft against defenceless Palestinian people. In an unequal battle it has destroyed their institutions and infrastructure, as well as the premises of the Palestinian Authority. The latest expression of Israeli aggression and brutal force was

the occupation of Orient House, in contravention of all previously signed agreements and commitments.

The Security Council has not succeeded in the past in adopting a draft resolution that might provide protection to the Palestinian people against the daily aggression to which it is subjected, just as it has not succeeded in halting the deterioration of the situation in the region, as called for by its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This Council is invested with a special responsibility to deter Israel, which has exceeded all possible limits in its aggression. Israel has assumed the right to defy the resolutions of the international community and the Security Council and the rules of international law, in particular humanitarian law, and the Fourth Geneva Conventions relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Accordingly, the United Nations is now faced with a major responsibility and challenge, particularly this Council, which must prove itself equal to the responsibilities incumbent on it. It must adopt immediate and urgent measures to bring an end to this violence that targets innocent, defenceless Palestinian civilians and provide them with the necessary protection.

Should the Council fail in its duty — the duty to provide protection to innocent civilians in Palestine from daily Israeli arbitrary measures — it will have failed in the duty assigned to it by the Charter. It is high time that Israel understand that violence cannot bring it the security that it desires. That security and peace cannot be achieved as long as its expansionist policy continues, a policy based on repression, aggression and the Judaization of Jerusalem.

The only way to peace in the Middle East necessarily means an end to Israeli occupation and a firm commitment by Israel to implement the resolutions of the international community and the Security Council, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), so as to enable the Palestinian people to establish its independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Israel's persistence in conducting its bloody campaign against the Palestinian people will lead to an explosion of the situation in the entire region; an explosion with unforeseeable consequences that could very well threaten international peace and security, as well as the interests of all parties in the region. That is why the Arab Group calls upon the Security Council to act quickly and urgently to protect the Palestinian people. It is no longer possible to wait and allow the situation to deteriorate further. The Arab States wish to express their unfailing support to the Palestinian people, who are faced with day-to-day arbitrary acts on the part of the occupation forces. We hail the legitimate fight of the Palestinian people, who are struggling to achieve self-determination — a legitimate right recognized by international law, the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights. The Palestinian people are not alone in their fight against Israeli policy. The Arab nation as a whole stands by their side.

In conclusion, the Arab States call upon the Security Council and the States sponsoring the peace process in the Middle East, as well as the European Union, to act as quickly as possible in order to halt the horrible deterioration of the situation in the region due to Israel's policy of aggression. Israel must be brought to respect international law, the international community and the resolutions of this Council and to halt its daily aggression against the Palestinian people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presiding over the Security Council this month. I am confident that, with your well-known experience and wisdom, you will lead the work of the Council to the ends that we all desire. Allow me also to express my thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, for his excellent leadership of the Council last month.

The Security Council is meeting once more to discuss the deteriorating and dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. This comes as a result of the continuation of the bloody and unjust military campaign of the Israeli military forces against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem; a campaign that is spreading terror and fear among the unarmed population and that is increasing the pain and agony of the Palestinian people, who are experiencing punitive

and inhumane actions and violations of their human rights. A few months ago, hundreds were killed, thousands were wounded, property was demolished, infrastructure was destroyed, farms were destroyed and the Palestinian economy has been damaged in order to make the Palestinians submit.

It would have been possible to save the people who were killed during the Israeli occupation. It would have been possible to save the victims and those wounded as a result of Israeli aggression. It would have been possible to put an end to the demolition and the violation of human rights. It would have been possible to put an end to violence and to calm the situation, if the Security Council had assumed its responsibilities and had maintained peace and security, which is its primary responsibility, and indeed the raison d'être of the United Nations.

A country that assassinates a people, usurps land, chases children, besieges the elderly, quashes values and violates rights is a State that is fond of terrorism and practises it. Yet, the Security Council is watching helplessly, instead of confronting the aggression, while others in the international community try to find illogical justification for the Israeli aggression. Principles of international legitimacy are ignored. Human rights are discarded, and the right to self-determination and all norms and laws attached to it are swept under the carpet.

The fact that the Security Council did not take necessary and effective measures to end Israel's transgressions and efforts to starve the Palestinian people and render it homeless, or to protect its legitimate rights, has increased that country's determination to pursue a policy of terrorism against the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people therefore believe that Israel is the only country that, with enormous and rather strange daring, does not recognize human rights and in fact disdains moral principles and disregards international public opinion. They also believe that the current Israeli Government's official course of action includes kidnapping, assassination, eroding the authority of the Palestinian Authority and eliminating its leaders and demolishing houses.

It is indeed regrettable that the Security Council continues to be a spectator while the forces of the Israeli occupation pursue their daily acts of aggression and indulge their addiction to violating human rights and to perpetrating crimes against the unarmed people of Palestine. Does not the Council see in the policies and practices of the Israeli occupation forces a need to apply international law? Does it not see in the violation of the rights of Palestinian human beings a need to intervene or call for the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War? Does the Council not see in the bloodshed and the growing number of demolitions a reason to intervene to preserve peace and security? Do not the aerial bombardment, artillery shelling, demolitions and burning undertaken by Israeli occupation forces give the Council reason to be concerned and, therefore, reason to involve itself?

The serious developments taking place in the area call for the Security Council to stop being a neutral party and to take measures that can put an end to Israel's aggression and to the way it deals with the Palestinians. It is unacceptable and irrational to have neutrality between the aggressor and the aggressed. How can there be neutrality between a murderer and his victim? How can there be neutrality between the occupier and those who are defending their rights and calling for their independence?

Israel's ongoing aggression against Palestinians and their territory is indeed a result of the fact that the international community does not want to interfere. This is reflected in the inability of the Council to take effective measures to end the inhumane acts and practices that the Israeli occupying forces are pursuing. That inability has given Israel some cover in its attempt to alter the balance of power in the region and to create new colonial facts on the ground before resuming negotiations on a final settlement. Israel has realized that the timing of the final settlement does not suit it and that the road to peace and settlement will not help it achieve its expansionist goals.

The policy of murder and assassination being pursued by Israel only confirms the terrorist nature of the current Israeli Government. It also proves that Israel does not take seriously the lives and rights of human beings and that it is violating international law and international humanitarian law. Those who commit such crimes must be held responsible. They should be tried for the crimes they have committed against humanity. Any reluctance to do so will only lead to more crimes.

The occupation of Orient House is a clear and flagrant violation of the Oslo agreements, by which

Israel undertook never to attack Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem. Moreover, excessive Israeli measures, founded on a policy of brute force, will have very negative and destructive results. They will not lead to peace or security; they will only serve to take the situation into chaos and destruction.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns these arbitrary and inhumane actions and holds Israel responsible for the consequences of its actions and policies. It strongly condemns the serious escalation of violence against the Palestinian people by the aggressive Israeli forces. We also condemn the air raids against civilian residences using every sort of heavy weapon, and the assassination of Palestinians. All these inhumane tactics are contrary to civilized behaviour. They constitute a violation of all the relevant international instruments aimed at bringing about peace.

In that context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appeals to all peace-loving countries to do all they can to end the aggression and transgressions against the people of Palestine. That would contribute to bringing about peace, security and justice. It will also avoid double standards. We look forward to the Council's assumption of its international responsibilities and its role, as well as its taking a firm stand against this inhumane aggression by Israel and its marginalization of all international treaties and agreements.

It is quite clear that the violence taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories is the result of the hopelessness and frustration born out of decades of occupation and the inhumane practices of the occupying Power, foremost among which are the building and expansion of Israeli settlements, the lack of any Israeli will to fulfil its commitments and the procrastination of that State to implement the agreements it has entered into. It is quite clear to the Security Council and to the international community at large that the genocide that Israel is perpetrating against the Palestinian people through its brutal forces and numerous actions is intended to uproot all the hopes of the Palestinians. Although genocide cannot be quantified, it is nevertheless quite clear in Israel's policies of assassination, destruction and burning. It is also quite clear that Israel is seeking to enslave the Palestinian people and deprive them of their legitimate rights to a decent life.

Policies of collective punishment — the closure of roads, checkpoints, land confiscation, restricting the movement of Palestinians, depriving them of work, subjecting them to starvation — and the effects of all this on the Palestinian economy and the growing number of acts of terrorism and assassinations that the Israeli authorities are pursuing emphasize the international character of the problem and, therefore, the responsibility of the Security Council towards that problem. The Council is morally, politically and legally responsible for the Palestinian people, who are seeking to exercise their inalienable rights. It is incumbent upon the Council to continue assuming its responsibility towards the Palestinian question until a satisfactory solution is found, in conformity with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law and until the rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

The Security Council for a long time has laid the necessary basis for solving the problem of the Palestinian question in its resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). If the Council has given up dealing with the Palestinian problem and left the issue to the two parties with the assistance of the mediators and the Madrid principles to push forward the peace process and to realize a final settlement, the Council must, after the deterioration of the situation, intervene and seek to restore peace and security to the occupied Palestinian territories. Among the Council's responsibilities is the preservation of international peace and security.

The peace process has witnessed difficulties and challenges before. However, the standstill that it is facing now and the serious deterioration of the situation may lead to very serious and grave international consequences. This makes it essential for the Security Council to reconsider the issue in depth and seek the help of the parties to settle the problem and to send an observer mission, which will help to de-escalate the situation, stop the violence, and to resume dialogue and negotiations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I wish to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, at the outset, for assuming

the presidency of the Council for this month, in which you have already displayed your diplomatic and political acumen. May I also extend our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan of China, for his effective leadership last month.

Against the background of repeated broken promises, failure to honour previous agreements and a litany of assurances unfulfilled, the situation in the Middle East is crying out for urgent help as it inches towards a conflagration, with both the Palestinians and the Israelis displaying mounting resolve to make the sacrifices necessary in the effort to break each other's will. All forms of contacts have ceased, and relations between the Palestinians and Israel, the occupying Power, are almost non-existent. If there is any contact at all, it is through the barrel of the gun. What a dreadful scenario, and what an alternative to the joy, warm handshakes and the high hopes pinned on the Oslo Declaration of Principles, of 1993, and on the so many subsequent negotiations, however protracted and less fruitful than they might have been.

What we are witnessing today is a war of attrition, which may grow into a regional war unless there is an immediate intervention by the international community. The Security Council cannot continue to stay on the sidelines. The continuous brutal acts of aggression by Israel — entering and attacking Palestinian-controlled areas in gross violation of agreements reached; targeting and destroying police headquarters, police stations, government facilities and infrastructures; and occupying the very symbols of Palestinian nationhood — all indicate to us the determination of the occupying Power to paralyse Palestinian institutions and their Authority in order to create a security vacuum.

The insistence by Israel on a ceasefire from the Palestinians while offering nothing in return — tangible or intangible — makes a mockery of its desire for security and peace. The overwhelming, brazen show of power by Israel simply highlights the glaring disparity of the forces. On one side, we have a nuclear power with the latest cutting-edge technology in air power, missiles, tanks, a superb navy and state-of-the-art intelligence. On the other side, we have young stone-throwers and men with basic weapons — with no armour, no artillery, no navy or any air defences.

Obviously, this large-scale military campaign by Israel is intended to coerce the Palestinians into submission and into accepting impossible conditions, or else face prolonged siege, expulsions or even the crippling of the Palestinian Authority. Anything is possible under the current climate. Such a policy is at best counterproductive, and at worst simply misguided, fuelling sentiments of distrust, hatred, despair and anger.

Relying on repressive measures alone — brutality, collective punishment, assassinations, demolitions and denial, and including unrealistic demands — cannot bring enhanced security to Israel. It has the right to security and to live in peace. Unfortunately, Israel has trapped itself in a vicious cycle of violence, leaving no room for diplomacy. This is a grave political blunder that requires serious rethinking.

The economic effects of the Israeli blockade, now almost a year old, in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip are alarming, with rising unemployment and falling incomes as people grapple with perhaps the most severe movement restrictions imposed on the Palestinian population and territory since 1967, according to a United Nations study just released. The restrictions on movement in and out of Palestinian areas and between towns and villages are having dire consequences on all economic activities and on the livelihood of the people.

The self-sustaining claim that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East is fast becoming a myth. For it is inconceivable that a nation that professes to respect universal values and norms is the one that at the same time pursues, as a matter of policy, cruel and discriminatory practices against the Palestinians, administering the notions of democracy and human rights as they relate to Palestinians as an option and not as an inalienable right as we know it. The lack, therefore, of any legal or moral basis for the continued colonization of the Palestinian people in this age and era, coupled with the phenomenal growth in illegal settlements, place Israel outside the self-proclaimed democratic and ethical norms at the centre of its foundation and continued existence. Israel cannot have one set of democratic principles and human rights standards for its own citizens and none at all extended to the Palestinian population under its occupation. It is a charade, to say the least.

We condemn all acts of violence and killings directed against innocent civilian populations on both

sides. As we all know, our attention is directed to the ever worsening situation through the day-to-day reports. We tend to focus on the disturbing accounts of the moment, often forgetting that this is yet one more side effect of a lingering, pervasive and much larger problem, namely, occupation — perhaps one of the longest, if not the longest, foreign occupation of a people in modern history.

Israel's 34-year-old occupation of Palestinian territory has long been condemned by the international community and by the Security Council as illegal and as a serious obstruction to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. In total disregard of repeated international demands, however, Israel has been vigorously pursuing the policy of extensive illegal settlements throughout the occupied territories. Those territories are today punctuated by Jewish settlements. The territory has been balkanized into about five dozen "bantustans" completely encircled by Israel. They are separated, with no territorial contiguity, no borders and no airspace. And travel between one bantustan and another is through Israeli checkpoints. The question is whether Israel will ever contemplate dismantling and relinquishing the illegal settlements to pave the way for a lasting peace with the Palestinians?

As one would expect, the current Prime Minister of Israel, in an interview last April, ruled out the removal of Jewish settlements, claiming that they provided "essential strategic depth to protect Israel's existence". And, in another interview in the same month, he said he was "willing to accept the establishment of a Palestinian State on 42 per cent of the West Bank".

So, in the context of that grim prospect, coupled with the failure of the peace process and the siege making life intolerable, the current widespread unrest was not unexpected. Now an escalation of rage and bitterness reigns. The more Israel employs the excessive power of repression, destruction and incursion, the more radical the Palestinian response becomes. There is no immediate end in sight under this scenario. And there is no alternative except mutually assured destruction.

Against the backdrop of such an explosive situation, the Council needs to be proactive and, in accordance with its mandate under the Charter and with relevant resolutions, to take steps necessary to de-escalate the violence that has already claimed hundreds of lives and has caused thousands of casualties and senseless destruction. Among the immediate measures that are deemed urgent are: to call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, including provocation, assassination and destruction, and for the lifting of the siege; to demand that Israel relinquish Orient House and the other Palestinian offices in and around Jerusalem; to urge the urgent resumption of the peace talks; to approve a monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the proposals set out in the Mitchell Committee's report; and to demand that Israel relieve the economic pressure inflicted upon the Palestinian people, including releasing the hundreds of millions of dollars in tax money owed to the Palestinian Authority.

Finally, the Council is called upon to heed and to exercise its Charter responsibility by ending the occupation which is the root cause of the persistent mayhem and suffering. It must also commit itself to restoring dignity, respect and sovereignty to the Palestinian people. Like all other peoples everywhere, they have the right to live in peace and to have a secure existence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Djibouti for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Maitland (South Africa): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you for convening this important discussion in the Security Council. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, has deteriorated so dramatically since the last open debate that it has become essential for the Council, as custodian of international peace and security, to reassess its efforts to bring peace to that region.

The occupation of Orient House and other symbols of Palestinian national identity constitutes a flagrant violation of the formal commitments made by Israel in the context of the Oslo process. The Israeli guarantee to respect the inviolability of official Palestinian institutions was one of the fundamental building blocks of the ensuing peace process. Israel's

recent provocative actions threaten the very basis on which the parties have pursued their search for peace over the past eight years.

The Non-Aligned Movement once again confirms that the Palestinian question remains the permanent responsibility of the United Nations until it is effectively resolved in all its aspects. It is the Security Council's duty to ensure that the Palestinian flag flies once again over East Jerusalem.

The Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly drawn the Council's attention to the dangerously high levels of frustration and violence that are being fomented by Israel's policies of closures, blockades and restrictions on the movement of people, goods and resources. Palestinian civilians are still being prevented from reaching their places of work and worship, and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate because essential supplies and funds for basic services are being withheld. As members of this Council well know, the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, expressly prohibits the collective punishment of a civilian population.

The Non-Aligned Movement once more reiterates its call on Israel to respect international humanitarian law and to cease its acts of military aggression against the civilian population of Palestine. Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) calls on Israel to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations with respect to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The present situation necessitates the reconvening of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as called for at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement has long affirmed that the question of Palestine constitutes the core of the Middle East conflict. The attainment of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital is pivotal to the achievement of a sustainable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The principle of land for peace, as articulated in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), remains valid today.

The Movement believes that peaceful negotiation is the only means of ensuring lasting peace, security and stability in the region. We urge the parties to take the required steps to ensure the cessation of hostilities, to restore calm and to adopt measures to re-establish mutual trust.

The framework for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and Palestine already exists in the form of the Egyptian-Jordanian proposals, the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the understandings regarding a ceasefire facilitated by the United States. What is lacking is a credible multinational presence on the ground to monitor any ceasefire that may be called by the parties and to serve as a visible symbol of the international community's concern for the safety and human rights of the peoples of Palestine and of Israel.

The Security Council must demonstrate its commitment to upholding international peace and security by acting expeditiously to set up a credible multinational monitoring mechanism to verify the implementation of agreements. The fate of the people of Palestine and Israel can no longer be left in the hands of extremists on both sides.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad-Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to extend, Sir, my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. We have full confidence that under your wise guidance, the Council will make progress in dealing with the issues on its agenda. I should also like to thank you for convening this important and timely meeting of the Security Council at this critical time for the Palestinian people.

I would like to express the grave concern of the Iranian people and Government over a further escalation by the Israeli regime in its inhumane practice of repression against the Palestinian people. The Israeli regime, in pursuit of its bloody campaign and racist and aggressive policy against the defenceless Palestinians, is employing more vicious measures. The assault against and seizure of Orient House, along with other Palestinian offices in the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif is in line with the iniquitous Israeli policy of negating the Palestinian national rights and distorting the Islamic character of the city. As such, it pertains directly to the sensitive issue of the status of Al-Quds

Al-Sharif and must be addressed by the international community, including the Islamic world.

The Israeli campaign of extrajudicial killings of Palestinians on the basis of hit lists is a flagrant violation of key tenets of natural justice and of provisions of international humanitarian law. The deeds and words of Israeli leadership now make it obvious that extrajudicial executions have become part of the regime's policy. This amounts to organized acts of terrorism by a Government, and the international community should not turn a blind eye to it.

Moreover, the incursions by heavily armed Israeli forces into Palestinian areas constitute yet another heavy-handed criminal act carried out by a Government armed to the teeth against a defenceless population. The destruction and the loss of Palestinian lives that follow such incursions further exacerbate the plight of Palestinians and add to instability in the whole region.

The criminal acts perpetrated by the Israeli regime further expose its true nature and negate the Israeli pretence of peaceful intentions or a desire for pacific coexistence with Muslims and Christians in the region. Israel's repeated crimes and heavy-handed approach run counter to all its high-sounding and empty claims of seeking peace. This regime is the principal cause of the tension and instability in the region.

Occupation lies at the very origin of the Palestinian conflict and overall tension and instability in the Middle East. The shocking developments over the past few months have made it more obvious that unless the principal cause of conflict is effectively addressed, the crisis could never subside. As to the real intention of the Israeli regime, it is significant that Israelis continue to reject the call for a freeze on all settlement construction activities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Not surprisingly, they continued with their Jewish settlement activity in the 1990s, which contravenes not only the norms and principles of international law but even flouts the letter and spirit of the agreements they signed with Palestinians. The significant increase in the population and areas under unlawful Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the past eight years attests to the fact that Israelis have never been serious about the so-called principle of land for peace. In other words, it is significant that they continue to colonize the territory from which they have been ostensibly negotiating to withdraw.

There should be no doubt about the fact that the continued occupation with no end in sight led to disillusionment and, consequently, to the ongoing Palestinian uprising. Therefore, without putting an end to the Zionist policy of occupying others' territories, the crisis in the Middle East cannot be brought to an end. As all peoples are endowed with the right to resist foreign occupation, the same right should also be fully recognized for the Palestinian people, and the international community should take appropriate actions in this direction.

In the face of more repressive and arbitrary measures adopted by Israelis and their open contempt for the will of the international community embodied in resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, we believe that now, more than ever, the Council needs to meet its responsibility and take the necessary actions to redress the situation in occupied Palestine, thus averting unforeseen and incalculable consequences that may induce the entire area to devastation and bloodshed.

Recent events have further demonstrated the need for international intervention, protection and an observer force to be established by the Council with a view to protecting defenceless Palestinian civilians from ever-increasing atrocities at the hands of Israelis. The veto last December of a draft resolution to authorize the establishment of a United Nations observer force proved to be a disservice to the volatile situation in the area. The presence of such a force on the ground could have forestalled more violence and more bloodshed and saved so many precious lives.

Moreover, it is imperative that the heavy-handed approach by the Israeli army, such as targeted assassinations, armed incursions, collective punishment, including tightening blockades and the closure of Palestinian areas, and the resort to heavy weapons against Palestinians, which amounts to war crimes, cannot go with impunity. In this respect, I would like to echo the appeal by the leaders of States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the 9th Islamic Summit held last November in Doha, calling on the Security Council to set up an international commission of inquiry to investigate the massacres perpetrated by Israel, and to constitute an international criminal tribunal in conformity with

international law in order to prosecute the Israeli war criminals who have perpetrated those savage massacres.

Furthermore, outrageous scenes, carried by the media to the living rooms of people across the globe, in which tanks, armoured carriers and helicopter gunships engage stone-throwers in the occupied territories, indicate that the time is ripe for the international community to contemplate the possibility of denying the occupying Power access to sources of armaments and military equipment.

Never, throughout history, has a colonial Power been able to terrorize a people into submission forever. Here, the fundamental question is whether or not the international community, represented by this Council, can fulfil its responsibility of limiting the extent of Palestinian blood and life lost and homelessness and agony imposed before the occupiers and aggressors are tamed and the fundamental rights of Palestinians to self-determination in their own land are realized.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We are always encouraged, Mr. President, to see your great country at the forefront of international efforts to support the cause of peace and security, whether in Palestine or elsewhere in the world. Speaking personally, I should like to say that it is always good to see you taking your job very seriously — you are presiding over this meeting with a very constructive approach — reflecting the commitment of your country to facilitating the resolution of problems such as that of Palestine.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to compliment Ambassador Wang Yingfan of the People's Republic of China for providing very effective and constructive stewardship of the Council during the preceding month.

It has been five months since we last discussed the situation in Palestine in a public meeting in this Chamber. It has been twice that long since this body passed a resolution on the matter before us. During that period, we have seen the situation in the occupied territories deteriorate day by day. The already alarming conditions on the ground have become explosive. Violence has escalated with the intensification of coercive measures against the Palestinian people.

The international community is rapidly running out of time and options. This meeting comes at an appropriate moment. But the question is: What do we expect from this meeting? Where do we go from here? Would another resolution make any difference? Has the Security Council implemented its earlier resolutions? What is the fate of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)? Is the Council ready to genuinely play the role assigned to it by the Charter?

As we seek answers to these questions, there is no end to the tragedy in Palestine. Many innocent lives have been lost in the past 15 days alone. The symbols of Palestinian sovereignty and nationhood have been blatantly violated and seized. In stark disregard of all humanitarian and legal norms, further targeted assassinations have been threatened. These methods are, indeed, typical of all those situations where a people living under foreign occupation are not only denied their inalienable rights but also subjected to repression and coercion through military force. While provocation and repressive tactics multiply, any attempt at resistance is branded as terrorism.

When oppressed people struggle for their rights, an effort is made to describe their just struggle as terrorism — that is a story that we have heard before. But when occupying States use massive force and violence to deny a people their inalienable rights and indulge in State terrorism, the world watches silently. What other name could be given to the repression of the peoples living under foreign occupation? How can we deny the legitimacy and glory of subjugated people's struggles for freedom and against injustice?

We are all aware that the fire in Palestine has the potential to engulf the whole region. The psychological impact of violent coercion is even more far-reaching, and freedom struggles have shown that oppression only strengthens the resolve of the oppressed. History has taught us that peace cannot be established through subjugation. It can be achieved only through the realization of the legitimate, inalienable right of self-determination. No attempt can crush the will of a people, whether in Palestine or elsewhere, struggling in such conditions against occupation and repression.

The volatile situation in Palestine warrants urgent measures. The international community must take immediate steps not only to facilitate resumption of the peace process but also to bring an immediate end to the violence, heavy-handedness and coercion in the occupied territories. Such provocative measures constitute serious breaches of the Oslo peace accord. They are also contrary to the assurances given to the brokers of Middle East peace in 1993 not to hamper the activities of the Palestinian institutions.

A durable peace cannot be established by binding a weaker party to agreements while allowing the stronger one a free hand. The disproportionate use of force against the Palestinian people and the unabated settlement activities undermine the prospects of peace. The present situation in Palestine demands active intervention on the part of the international community to reverse this dangerous trend and oversee the implementation of the commitments made and agreements signed.

As in the case of other people under foreign occupation, Pakistan has been a firm supporter of the just struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable rights. We reaffirm our solidarity with them. We respect and honour their wishes, reflected in the draft resolution presented to this Council. We support the full implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report. The Security Council could also deploy a United Nations protection observer force in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Such a measure would help to cool down the situation and facilitate the resumption of the peace process. The international community must also ensure full respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the occupied territories.

The status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif remains central to any comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. No lasting peace in the region will be possible without the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. These include their right to establish their independent State with Jerusalem as its capital and the exercise of full sovereignty over Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

This time last year, you will recall, Sir, we stood close to realizing the dream of peace in the Middle East. Although the peace process has been derailed, we must not lose hope or the will to put it back on track. What is required is political will rather than political expediency, complete rather than selective implementation of Security Council resolutions and decisions, and concerted action rather than empty debate.

We have seen the end of one century and the beginning of another. Unfortunately, some of the chapters of the last century that were written in the blood of innocent people have yet to be closed. It is time now for the international community to enable this Council to uphold its moral and legal obligations under the Charter. Those who have the power and the responsibility to maintain international peace must act now to revive the process of negotiations and the hopes of peace in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also want to express our appreciation of the work of your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, who ably chaired the Council during the past month.

I would like to state that my delegation fully supports the statement delivered by His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Arab Group at the United Nations. We greatly appreciate your prompt response, Sir, in convening this meeting to consider the deteriorating situation in Palestine, a situation that poses a threat to international peace and security, which is the primary responsibility of the Security Council. The bloody events that are taking place in the occupied Palestinian territory will soon enter their second year. Meanwhile, the situation is worsening and becoming increasingly exacerbated by the policies of oppression and escalation that are being pursued by the Israelis. It has become quite clear that the Israeli leaders are pushing the situation and the region towards dire consequences.

At this meeting we do not want to dwell on the war crimes that Israel is committing against the Palestinian people. These crimes include the killing of infants and children, the demolition of houses, the

burning of fields, the destruction of the environment, the siege of the Palestinian territories in order to starve the people, and the targeting of the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority. We do not want to talk about these aggressive Israeli policies because — since the media show horrific examples of them day and night — they are quite well known to everyone here. I believe we have all gotten used to seeing Palestinian infants and children torn apart as a result of ongoing Israeli terrorism against unarmed Palestinian civilians.

These aggressive Israeli practices are illegitimate and cannot but lead the Security Council to discuss the situation, particularly since these practices reflect an organized policy aimed at the total erosion of all the agreements that Israel has concluded with the Palestinian side since the Madrid Conference. This policy is an attempt by the Israelis to shed the commitments it made under these treaties and agreements.

This Council held a special session dedicated to serious efforts to protect civilians in situations of conflict. We all remember the meetings that were held and the statements that were made. Today, however, we are confronted with a special situation — indeed a dangerous one — which requires the international community and the Security Council in particular to assume the responsibility vested in it by the Charter of the United Nations. This responsibility is simply to maintain international peace and security.

In this context, we hope that the Security Council will fulfil its obligations and its duty as set forth in Article 24 of the Charter. We also hope that the Council will take the necessary measures to fulfil its role as clearly defined in Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter.

We do not expect miracles from the Security Council. All we want is for the Security Council to be an impartial judge. We want it to assume the role stipulated for it in the Charter, so that history will record that the Council is an impartial body — a body that has credibility and that fulfils its duties and obligations fully without indulging in double standards.

It is our hope that the Council will regain its credibility, that the Council will play its role and shake off the hesitation and inertia that have characterized it for many years.

To put it simply, the Security Council is the author of the two celebrated resolutions regarding the situation in the Middle East: 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the achievement of a peaceful, just and lasting settlement. The Council was also asked to fully implement these two resolutions. The peace process, which was dealt a severe blow by the policies of the present Israeli Government, cannot be reactivated without the full implementation of these two important resolutions, the acceptance of the principle of land for peace, and adherence to the references of the Madrid Conference.

Finally, we must reiterate that the problem of Palestine is not simply a problem of human rights, crimes against humanity, war crimes and so forth. It is a problem of the occupation of a land and a people by force. It is a problem of a threat to international peace and security. We therefore hope, first, that the Council will adopt a resolution by which international protection will be provided to the Palestinian people. This request has become an international one that gained the unanimous support of the Group of 8 during its summit meeting held in Genoa, Italy, last month. It is our hope that this international request will be translated into a resolution that will be adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, which will put an end to the bloodbath that is currently taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Secondly, the Council must seek to put an end to the ongoing Israeli occupation and to the suffering of the Palestinian people. We expect that this Council will take practical and tangible measures to contain an explosive situation, and not become a free forum for political rhetoric. The Palestinian people will continue their struggle and resistance against the Israeli occupation until they recover all their inalienable rights, particularly their right to establish their independent State on their land — and as Chairman Arafat says and repeats and we agree with him — with Jerusalem as its capital.

Consequently, we make an urgent appeal in this forum to the Security Council, the co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community to intervene promptly to put an end to Israeli aggression and oppressive, arbitrary measures that run contrary to all international laws and norms, to provide international protection to the Palestinian people and to restore the Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem to the status quo ante so that they will continue to play the role agreed upon within the context of the peace

process, and thereby put the peace process back on track.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Bahrain for his remarks to the presidency.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Ambassador Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I wish to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I am confident that under your able leadership, the work of the Council will be carried out in a constructive and an efficient manner. I also take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, on the exemplary manner in which he steered the work of the Council during the month of July.

I am grateful to you, Mr. President, as well as to other members of the Council, for having given me the opportunity in my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to participate in this important debate on the critical escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

The Committee is extremely worried by the latest dramatic escalation of tensions and violence in and around East Jerusalem and in areas under full Palestinian control. From what we have witnessed in the past several days, it appears that Israel has no intentions of abiding by agreements signed with the Palestinian side and has firmly decided on wide-scale military operations in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in areas under full control of the Palestinian Authority. The latest and most striking incidents include the takeover of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and Abu Dis.

Besides being a blatant provocation, the Israeli flag triumphantly hoisted on the roof of this Palestinian institution was a vivid example of this policy. Three days later, in a massive offensive-like operation involving tanks, armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers, supported by helicopter gunships, the Israeli Defence Forces invaded the West Bank town of Jenin and is now apparently set to do the same in Beit Jalla and Bethlehem — all "A" areas under full Palestinian control.

Israel continues to use sophisticated weapons, such as missiles and helicopter gunships, in the extrajudicial killing of suspected Palestinian militants. The death toll is rising — now totalling more than 700 people, some 550 of them Palestinian. The Palestinian economy is decimated and the infrastructure of the occupied Palestinian territory has been further eroded.

What we hear as an excuse, obviously unacceptable, is that these measures are taken in response to the continuing violence on the part of the Palestinians, including suicide bombings in Israeli cities. We are certainly strongly opposed to any actions resulting in the loss of life — Israeli or Palestinian. After 34 years of occupation and with no prospect for a better future, with promises for a peace settlement shattered, the Palestinian people are left completely defenceless and vulnerable to arbitrary and excessively harsh actions by the Israeli military.

Only a couple of months ago, the recommendations made by the Mitchell Committee seemed to offer a way out of the impasse. However, the unrealistic proposition that all violence cease before the cooling-off period starts and negotiations resume has brought us to the current critical situation. The recent violations by Israel of international law and provisions of its agreements with the Palestinian side prove again that it has not been able to embrace fully and unequivocally the fundamental principle of "land for peace" and apply in practice the commitments and obligations it made at Madrid and Oslo.

For some time, we have been discussing ways of helping the parties out of the maze of the present crisis. Obviously, the two sides — already left to their own devices for too long — cannot achieve a breakthrough now. They need the assistance of the international community and this Council, which has been given the primary responsibility in the area of international peace and security.

Although all the elements are present, the Council has on numerous occasions failed to take any tangible action. We believe that the Mitchell Committee report and its recommendations should be implemented in

their entirety. A framework for their implementation should be established within a reasonable time span and with international community monitoring the compliance of both parties. Negotiations on security, as well as consideration of the interim and permanent status issues, should be revived as a matter of urgency. The Committee is of the view that a permanent-status agreement, long overdue, should be finally reached on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Only once there is a sovereign Palestinian State, with guaranteed and safe borders, will there be peace. Only then will the two neighbouring peoples — the Israelis and the Palestinians — be able to enjoy security and prosperity and embark on building their relationship for the future.

For over a quarter of a century now, our Committee has been reiterating that the core of the problem has been the continuing illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory. Today, we call again upon the Government of Israel to respect and live up to the principles of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the provisions of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The Committee has repeatedly put forward its position with respect to the situation on the ground and the threat it poses to international peace and security, and with respect to the stalemate in the peace negotiations, the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the deplorable state of the Palestinian economy. I would like to conclude by urging the members of the Council to face the challenges before us and come up swiftly with concrete and decisive steps aimed at addressing the present crisis in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his kind remarks addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We hope that under your presidency the Council will take practical steps to give a glimmer of hope to the peoples of the region so that dialogue and coexistence can be resumed and the logic of peace and cooperation will prevail over the logic of confrontation and vengeance. I would also like to thank you for having responded favourably to the request submitted by the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to convene a special meeting of the Council to take up the tragic situation in the Palestinian territories. Finally, I would like warmly to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, for his wisdom and clear-sightedness in guiding the work of the Council last month.

Just a few months ago, the world looked forward with optimism to the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. At the time, there was hope for possible progress as a first step towards restoring real, just peace to the Middle East — a peace that would enable all peoples in the region to finally be able to enjoy their legitimate rights, security and tranquillity. Commendable efforts were made at that time, in particular by the two sponsors of the peace process, as well as by the European Union and the Arab States, to encourage the two parties — Israel and the Palestinians — to move forward and resolve all difficulties. That breakthrough, to which we had so looked forward, was not forthcoming.

Thereafter the region found itself in a spiral of violence. Israeli forces adopted a policy of escalation — a policy of killing children and civilians, restricting the freedom of movement of Palestinians, reinforcing the economic blockade, confiscating land, destroying houses, consolidating the settlements policy, and balkanizing and desecrating Palestinian territory. Because of the international community's hesitation to put an end to these violations with sufficient promptness and determination, the Israeli forces continued to pursue their repressive policies with a vengeance. They also continued their policy of assassination, targeting Palestinian leaders and threatening to kill the relatives and families of those whom they suspected of participating in resisting the occupation.

Israeli forces invaded the premises of Palestinian institutions, in particular Orient House in Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Israeli Government itself had previously recognized the legal status of Orient House. For over three decades it had agreed to respect that status and not attack it. It was then that the Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of

Morocco, issued a statement condemning the occupation of Orient House by Israeli forces. His Majesty condemned all forms of violence and counter-violence and called upon the sponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation — and the United Nations to take the necessary steps to halt the policy of occupation and of violation of the Holy Places and of Palestinian and Islamic institutions in Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Chairman of the Committee appealed to the Security Council, the Secretary-General and international and regional organizations active on the question of peace to act swiftly to apply the ceasefire agreement and relaunch peace negotiations.

A people, like the Israelis, that wants to live in security with its neighbours cannot allow its leaders to humiliate and kill those who are its partners today and who will be its partners in the future. The international community and the Security Council cannot remain bystanders in the light of the violations committed by Israel. They cannot deny human values and ignore the international conscience. They cannot allow the region to become caught up in the cycle of attack and counter-attack. If things continue as they are, the situation will continue to get worse and the crisis will become evermore acute. That will only feed feelings of hatred. This policy cannot bring about any success in the efforts to achieve a ceasefire, to say nothing of the negotiations themselves. Nor can it lead to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We are absolutely convinced that things would not have reached this dangerous point and that this crisis would not have arisen had the Security Council adopted a resolution in March to send international observers to determine responsibility and to prevent acts of violence. We express the hope today that the Council will be able to live up to the aspirations of the peoples of the region, as well as those of the international community, by changing its policy and ensuring that the situation does not get any worse. My delegation appeals to the Council and to the Secretary-General to act robustly and responsibly in the light of the seriousness of the situation.

Measures must be adopted making it possible to implement the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report, to urge Israel to comply with its commitments and with international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. We hope that the Security Council will do everything possible to provide the necessary international protection for the Palestinian people, and that it will exert all necessary pressure to break the vicious cycle of violence and to encourage the Israeli Government to give up the policy that it has been conducting for the last few months and to agree to resume negotiations where they had been left off.

My delegation asks the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities pursuant to the Charter. We are convinced that peace and security in the Middle East will continue to depend on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), within the context of the principle of land for peace, so that the Palestinians can enjoy all their rights, particularly their legitimate right to create their own State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and so that Israel will withdraw from the rest of the occupied Arab territories, including the Golan Heights and the Lebanese occupied territories.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Morocco for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belgium. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central Europe and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey as well as the countries of the European Free Trade Association that are members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union once again today expresses its great concern at the violent events that have taken place in the Middle East in recent months and, in particular, in recent weeks. It rejects as unjustifiable violence in any form, which only exacerbates an already disquieting situation in the Middle East and renders ineffective the international community's efforts to relaunch a political process.

The parties must replace the logic of confrontation and violence without delay with that of dialogue and negotiation. It is high time that the parties

reconsidered, turned resolutely towards the future and worked together to restore the climate of mutual trust that is necessary to break the vicious cycle of violence and retaliation. The European Union reminds the Israeli and Palestinian authorities that it is their responsibility to do everything possible to avoid any action that might claim new victims. We are convinced that there is no alternative to a political solution.

The escalation of violence, which has intensified dramatically in recent days, is intolerable. The European Union most vehemently condemns the latest suicide bombings. These acts, particularly the ones that target Israeli civilians, are hateful and repugnant in the extreme. Terrorism is a serious threat to the stability of the region. It must be resisted with the utmost rigour. The European Union also condemns all assistance to organizations that practise terrorism, whether in the form of financial aid or of providing weapons or training. The European Union calls upon the Palestinian Authority to do everything possible to bring the violence to an end, particularly by arresting and bringing to justice the perpetrators, instigators and sponsors of acts of terror.

Israel's decision to close Orient House and other institutions in Jerusalem does not serve the interests of peace and can only weaken the Palestinian leadership at a time when it is called upon to show firm resolve in the fight against extremism. It runs counter to the declared objective, which must remain the restoration of security for all. Unilateral acts can do nothing to alter the international community's long-standing position on the status of the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. The European Union would like to see the closure reversed at the earliest date, and the archives returned, and would like to see Israel demonstrate maximal restraint by avoiding any act that could be considered as provocative.

The European Union believes that extrajudicial executions are not only illegal and unacceptable but are also obstacles to peace and are therefore damaging to both parties. The European Union calls on Israel to show the utmost restraint in the use of military force.

The European Union reaffirms its view that the basis of negotiations, and of a just and lasting peace, must be Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions, including the rejection of the acquisition of territory by war, the need for every State in the region to be able to live in security, and the principle of land for peace. We reaffirm our belief that the only way to restore security for all is to return to the route mapped out by the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Accords and the recommendations of the Mitchell report, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Mitchell Committee's recommendations must be immediately and fully implemented. Any further delay or conditions placed on the implementation of those recommendations would play into the hands of extremists and would perpetuate the violence. An impartial monitoring mechanism is needed to overcome the obstacles that could impede the implementation of the recommendations. The European Union is convinced that this mechanism would serve the interests of both parties.

The European Union urges the two sides to open a sustained political dialogue without delay in order to break the deadlock, and it expresses its support for the initiatives along these lines, including the one taken by Mr. Shimon Peres, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel. It expresses the hope that such dialogue will open the way for a political approach to resolving the conflict.

The European Union remains willing to play its role, in close cooperation with the United States as well as with the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and all other partners committed to the quest for peace in the Middle East.

The European Union expects the Security Council to provide constructive, useful support in order to make this effort effective and in order to contribute to the implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations and to the resumption of dialogue between the parties.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Yemen. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to thank you, Sir, and to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to commend your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, who ably conducted the work of the Council last month.

We wish also to place on record our appreciation to you, Sir, for promptly convening this meeting, especially since the Council has recently displayed great reluctance to act on requests for a meeting to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Since September 2000 — and more specifically, since the Sharon Government took power — the occupying Power, Israel, has continued its multifaceted military campaign against the Palestinian people, as well as its policy to impose closures, isolation and siege against Palestinian towns. It has escalated and intensified its aggression against the Palestinian people by using heavy weapons, including artillery, tanks and air forces, and by carrying out incursions into Palestinian territory. It has also attacked Lebanon and bombarded Syrian targets in Lebanon.

More recently, Israeli security forces occupied Orient House and nine other East Jerusalem offices of the Palestinian Authority, attacking and arresting Palestinian guards and confiscating important documents and archives, including maps and titles of ownership of Palestinian land. It has forcibly altered the situation in the village of Abu Dis, near East Jerusalem.

It is clear that Israel is implementing a carefully devised plan to destroy the peace process and to shed all its obligations and responsibilities under international law, including those deriving from Security Council resolutions on the Middle East, which provide a framework for a lasting peace. Events in the Palestinian territories since September 2000 clearly reveal the Zionist plan: Israel has escalated its violence, pursuing a policy of incremental escalation in both the political and the military spheres. It is reflected also in Israel's recourse to excessive force and in the extension of its military operations to include the assassination of civilians, the destruction of Palestinian Authority infrastructure and incursions into Palestinian Authority territory.

But more important, Israel continues to persist in its settlement activities, which is the core problem in Palestine. In press interviews, Sharon has claimed that the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 are "contested" land, not occupied land as the international community has declared them.

The Security Council bears a special responsibility to put an end to the murder and displacement of the Palestinian people. It also bears the responsibility to bring about peace in accordance with its own long-standing resolutions. It is regrettable that the Council has failed to adopt a resolution that would protect the Palestinian people. This only encourages Israel's intransigence and its aggression against the Palestinian people.

What seems to call the Security Council's credibility into question is that the Council has asserted its authority in other parts of the world, while it is a mere spectator on issues relating to Israel and to Israel's violations of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The prevailing impression among the Arab public is thus that the Security Council is selective and adopts a double standard.

The peace process that began in the 1990s was supposed to promote the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) through the participation of the major Powers, especially the United States of America, in the search for an acceptable formula for the implementation of those resolutions. Great efforts were made to that effect, but, sadly, the peace process is at a near standstill. Indeed, there is a danger that the situation in the Middle East could deteriorate into all-out war.

All these factors bring the issue back to the Security Council. The Council must attach due importance to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Republic of Yemen hails the struggle of the Palestinian people and its steadfastness in confronting Zionist arrogance and the continued intensification and escalation. Israeli practices and crimes against the Palestinians — such as aggression, bloodshed, blockades, the desecration of holy places, the confiscation of land and the demolition of property — demand that the Security Council shoulder its responsibility to provide the Palestinian people with international protection and to force Israel to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy.

Israel's occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in holy Jerusalem constitutes yet another dangerous escalation. It is in flagrant violation of all international instruments and agreements to which Israel is party. Here again, this situation demands that the Security Council take a firm

stand to reverse all the measures taken by Israel to occupy Orient House and other Palestinian institutions and to stop the demolition of houses, the confiscation of land, isolation and starvation, and to make Israel return to the negotiating table in accordance with signed agreements that the dispute should be settled on the basis of Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace, and the recommendations of the Mitchell report.

All of this should ultimately enable the Palestinian people to regain its rights and to establish an independent State of its own on its national territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Yemen for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Akasaka (Japan): Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to you for providing us with the opportunity to present Japan's views on the grave situation we face in the Middle East.

Japan is deeply concerned that the situation in the occupied territories has been witnessing the worst crisis of the current peace process, which started in 1993. We are alarmed by the rising death toll there, mostly among civilians, including innocent children. We express our deepest condolences to the bereaved families, and our heartfelt sympathy to the injured. A vicious cycle of violence and hatred can do nothing but bring about more tragedy and decrease opportunities for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, which can be brought about only by negotiations based on mutual trust.

Japan calls upon all the parties concerned to put an immediate end to acts of violence, provocation and retaliation, and to any other actions that could further aggravate the situation. We urge all the parties to exert maximum self-restraint.

In this context, Japan urges the Israeli Government to put an end to the excessive use of force, entries into the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority, and the seizure of Orient House and other properties belonging to Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem. Japan also urges the Palestinian Authority to exert its utmost efforts to prevent the recurrence of terrorist attacks, which cannot be justified for any reason.

Japan would also like to stress that the recommendations of the Mitchell report should be fully implemented at the earliest possible time. In this connection, we would like to recall the G-8 Genoa Summit statement on the Middle East, issued on 21 July, which states that "third-party monitoring, accepted by both parties, would serve their interests in implementing the Mitchell report".

Mr. Seiken Sugiura, Japan's Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, conveyed these views of Japan to the countries of the region during his trip to the Middle East earlier this month, when he met with political leaders of Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

As Japan has stated on various occasions, the serious deterioration of the Palestinian economy is a matter of grave concern to us. Economic difficulties have a direct and serious impact on the real life of the Palestinians and no doubt have a negative effect on the peace process. Here again, we must avoid the vicious circle of the deterioration of the economy and the escalation of hatred and violence. In this context, the economic closure imposed on the Palestinians must be lifted and the tax transfer to the Palestinian Authority must be resumed. My delegation would like to add, in this regard, that Japan has extended contributions to the Palestinians amounting to $21 million since the end of last September, when the current state of violence broke out.

The crisis can be resolved only through serious efforts by both parties based on self-restraint and mutual trust. The international community must stand by such efforts. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, that Japan remains ready to extend every possible support, both political and economic, for the resolution of the current crisis, in cooperation and coordination with the international community.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Japan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to commend the remarkable efforts of the Permanent Representative of China, who chaired the Council last month.

The prompt response of the Council to the request of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to hold this important meeting to discuss the dangerous and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories only proves the Council's conviction that it must take steps to stop this deterioration by reason of the Council's responsibility to international peace and security, as stated in the United Nations Charter. In fact, the international community's standing idly by while the Palestinian people suffer since September last daily aggressions by the Israelis has encouraged the Israeli Government to intensify and escalate its aggression against the Palestinian people, with a view to imposing a status quo policy and to forcing the Palestinians to renounce their legitimate rights.

The situation in the occupied territories is very grave and poses a real threat to peace and stability in the region because of the insistence of the Israeli Government on its aggression and on its rejection of all international commitments and resolutions. From time to time, the Israeli authorities launch full-scale aggression against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, thereby violating the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, using all forms of oppression and all forms of weapons. This has led to the death of hundreds and the injuring of thousands. Israel has been closing Palestinian areas in order to intensify the economic siege, which has exacerbated the suffering of the Palestinian people and has led to great deterioration in their standard of living. The Israeli Government is also pursuing policies of assassinations, arrests and demolition of houses, ignoring all the appeals of the international community to desist from such abominable practices, which violate basic human rights.

A few days ago, the occupation forces occupied Orient House and nine other offices of the Palestinian Authority in East Jerusalem, again violating the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the peace process. In this context, we affirm our adherence to all the Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem, which declare null and void all the measures undertaken by Israel to change the features of this Holy City.

The Israeli Government is clearly trying to shake off its responsibilities in the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority. It is flouting the basic principles agreed to in these agreements and more specifically, resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace.

Israel's aggressive policies will continue unless the Security Council and the international community assume their responsibilities and take firm measures to put an end to the crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people and to try their perpetrators, and to send international observers as soon as possible to protect the Palestinians from the oppression of the occupying force. In this respect, we call on the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union, and all peace-loving countries and organizations to exercise maximum pressure on Israel to respect the bilateral agreements it signed with the Palestinians and to implement the recommendations in the Mitchell report in order to pave the way for the resumption of negotiations within the context of the peace process and to reach a final settlement that includes all issues and that will give the Palestinian people all their legitimate rights.

The Israeli Government has to realize that its oppressive measures and practices will not result in the security it is seeking as long as it continues occupying other territories and as long as it ignores its international obligations and the agreements it signed with the Palestinian Authority within the peace process. This violation of agreements will only lead to an increase in the tension and in the cycle of violence and wars that has been witnessed in this vital region in the last four decades, and which has affected all the resources, potentials and capabilities that could have been directed to development.

For peace to be permanent, comprehensive and lasting, it has to be based on international legitimacy, more specifically, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace, and the withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab land occupied in 1967, including the Golan Heights and territories in southern Lebanon.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Kuwait's support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights and to establish an independent State on their territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ly (Mauritania) (*spoke in French*): I should like, before dealing with the item on the agenda today — the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question — to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I am sure that your experience and personal qualities will help to enhance and enlighten our debate.

I should also like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of China, Ambassador Wang Yingfan, for his work as President of the Security Council in the month of July.

My delegation believes that no just and lasting peace can be achieved in the Middle East region, including occupied Palestine, as long as violence persists and remains a daily fact of life. My delegation deplores and condemns the recent serious developments in the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have led to the illegal and unacceptable occupation of Orient House, as well as other buildings, in which several headquarters of Palestinian institutions are located, in East Jerusalem, Jenin and, more recently, Khan Younis. This deplorable situation has, of course, led to a considerable loss of life, and contravenes the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949.

In the light of this continuing escalation of violence, the international community is required, now more than ever, to play a more positive role in order to restore peace and security to this region, which has suffered so much. This Council bears the principal responsibility for ensuring international peace and security under the Charter. That is why the dispatch, as soon as possible, of international observers to provide protection and security to the Palestinian civilian population has become an absolute necessity. Only the Security Council, which you represent here, bears responsibility for taking this step.

We welcome the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report, which the international community broadly supports. The implementation of those recommendations could help to restore an appropriate framework for a return to the negotiating table in order to complete work on agreements already concluded between the parties in Madrid, Oslo and Sharm el-Sheikh.

Despite the setbacks and obstacles on the path towards the settlement of the Palestinian question, my delegation remains convinced that peace is still attainable. That is why we reaffirm our commitment to the peace process that began in Madrid.

In conclusion, I should like to say that only international legality and legitimacy can ultimately prevail. We believe that relevant Security Council resolutions — 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) — as well as the principle of land for peace, remain the only basis for a final resolution of the Palestinian question. This should lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mauritania for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Allow me to congratulate you — and your country, Sir — on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan of China, for his outstanding stewardship of the Council last month.

I should like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening this urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the grave situation in the occupied Arab territories. I should like to thank the other members of the Council for acceding to the request for this meeting, jointly made by the Chairman of the Islamic Group and the Chairman of the follow-up committee of the ninth Islamic summit conference.

My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa, the Permanent Observer for Palestine, who

briefed the Council this morning on the current grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Ten months of almost uninterrupted violence, following the provocation of September last year, have taken a heavy toll of human life and injuries. Over 600 people have died, an overwhelming number of whom are Palestinian. The cycle of violence has continued unabated and promises to become worse in the coming days and weeks unless the international community, particularly this Council, intervenes to put an end to it. Indeed, if the Council intends to carry out its responsibility under the Charter, it will have little choice but to intervene.

The measures taken by the Israeli Government in the name of security have reached dangerous and untenable proportions. These include continued reliance on excessive use of force and the overwhelming use of military power, the invasion of Palestinian territory, and a vicious grip on Palestinian life in the occupied territories through closures and seizures, the destruction and demolition of Palestinian properties and other forms of harassment and intimidation of the Palestinian population in pursuance of an indiscriminate policy of collective punishment.

The forcible seizure of Orient House in East Jerusalem strikes at the very basis of the peace process and further diminishes any hope of reviving it. The takeover of Orient House and of other Palestinian institutions, coupled with assassinations of targeted Palestinian officials, is among the most arrogant and provocative of these actions by the Israeli authorities. These latest actions are tantamount to the abrogation of all the agreements that Israel has entered into with the Palestinian side since the Oslo Accords. The decision of the Israeli occupying Power to take these steps, particularly the closure of Palestinian institutions, represents a dangerous escalation in the Israeli military campaign that has been waged against the Palestinian people since last September. It also represents an assault on Palestinian national dignity and Palestinian rights in Jerusalem.

Clearly, these actions are not likely to cow the Palestinian people as intended. On the contrary, they are likely to heighten Palestinian anger, frustration and despair, and will inflame the situation even further, resulting in even greater tension and polarization between Israelis and Palestinians.

No peace-loving country, including my own, condones violence, particularly against innocent civilians. But violence begets violence. Hence the importance of abandoning such policies forthwith, in favour of dialogue and negotiations.

In addressing this issue at this point in time, the Council cannot but be cognizant of two important facts or realities which must be addressed: first, the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories; and secondly, the continued violation of the human rights of the Palestinians and other Arabs living in the occupied territories. Both must come to an end, as they are in clear and irrefutable violation of international law, humanitarian law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Israel must be strongly and constantly reminded of its obligations under international law and the Charter of the United Nations to withdraw from those territories and to respect the human rights of their inhabitants. Its wrongful and illegal actions in those territories should not be condoned or, least of all, protected. Israel, like other Members of the Organization, must fulfil its obligations under the Charter.

Pressures similar to those that have been exerted by the Council on other errant and non-complying Members of the Organization in the past must also now be exerted on Israel. Failure to do so is tantamount to treating Israel as a special case, a privileged Member of the Organization, a Member that is somehow exempt from complying with the requirements of international law. Yes, Israel is a State, a Member of this Organization, but beyond that it has no special status in the community of nations. It should be treated like any other State and must fulfil all its obligations and responsibilities without exception. Like other States that have to grapple with issues of internal peace and security, it should have to conform, as others do, with the rules of international and humanitarian law. There should be no special dispensation for Israel either here in this Council or in any other international forum.

In the past, the Council was not able to carry out its responsibility under the Charter on this issue, because either it was prevented from doing so or it was unable to implement the resolutions it had passed on the situation in Palestine. Clearly, in the light of the grave situation obtaining in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Council cannot afford to maintain the same position. Non-action by the Council in the face of continued provocative actions by Israel in the occupied

territories would be a gross dereliction of the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It would also be condoning the continued use of force and military power by Israel over the helpless inhabitants of the occupied territories. More significantly, it would signal the Council's ambivalence or lack of support for the peace process — or, worse still, its indirect support for resolution of the conflict by non-political means. By not doing anything, the Council would once again be turning a deaf ear to the pleas of the Palestinian people living under occupation and would be demonstrating its lack of will and its impotence on the issue of Palestine.

The Council will have to seriously ponder its role regarding the issue of Palestine. For far too long it has allowed itself to be sidelined on the basis of the argument of a few that a resolution of the issue should best be pursued by the parties directly concerned in the conflict, or that the Council's involvement would only "complicate" the sensitive negotiations between the parties. Surely, in the face of recent events those arguments can no longer be persuasive. They should not have been persuasive in the first place.

The peace process is for all intents and purposes dead, thanks — or rather, no thanks — to the policies and practices of the new Israeli Government. It is incumbent upon this Council to exert every effort to revive the process on an urgent basis, especially in the face of the hesitation or reluctance on the part of other influential parties to be more directly involved in jump-starting the process.

We, the international community, must rekindle the faith among both Palestinians and Israelis in a peaceful resolution of the conflict and douse any prospects of a return to war. In that regard we must give our strong and unqualified support to the report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, the Mitchell report. That report provides a good and viable basis on which to end the cycle of violence, break the deadlock and build the necessary bridge back to the negotiating process, which alone guarantees enduring peace and security for the parties concerned — as opposed to continuing conflict or warfare between them.

My delegation considers the draft resolution being circulated as rather modest in its objectives. But we support it, as it provides the practical basis for consensus in the Council, which is important if the Council is to carry out its duties. The draft resolution, inter alia, calls for the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, provocation and destruction, and for the return to the positions and the regimens that existed prior to September 2000. It also calls for the speedy and comprehensive implementation of recommendations of the Mitchell report, for the establishment of a monitoring mechanism regarding the implementation of that report, and for Israel to reverse all actions taken against Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in and around East Jerusalem. Only those and other proposed measures contained in the draft resolution will constitute a reasonable basis for a return to negotiations, paving the way for lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis — instead of more intimidation and harassment or further military action in a vain attempt to break the spirit of the Palestinian people.

My delegation also believes that the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and the Russian Federation, as well as the European Union and the larger international community, must play a more active role in defusing the current tense situation and in encouraging the parties, particularly Israel, to return to negotiations. We once again reiterate our call to the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and to take the necessary action in that regard. We continue to believe that there is a need to establish an international observer force for the protection of Palestinian civilians, as well as to ensure compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions, international law, international humanitarian law and existing Palestinian-Israeli agreements. Any attempt by this Council to appease the occupying Power will not only make the situation more dangerous, it will be wrong, and it will call into question the credibility of the Council. This must be avoided at all costs. My delegation therefore appeals to the Council and the Secretary-General to respond vigorously to diffuse the current explosive situation and to help relaunch the peace process as a matter of great urgency. Clearly, the Council can ill afford to treat the Palestinian issue in its present circumstances as in the past.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bebars (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are confident that you are capable of conducting the affairs of this Council, as far as this important issue is concerned, so that the Council can assume its responsibility as spelled out in the Charter for maintaining international peace and security. I also wish to commend and thank the Permanent Representative of China, who ably presided over the Council last month.

We meet today at a time when the international community is gravely concerned over the serious developments in the occupied territories, particularly Jerusalem. The hope for peace indeed faces an acute crisis. Since last September, the Palestinian people have been subject to violent and aggressive Israeli practices that have resulted in hundreds of martyrs and thousands of wounded. Property of the Palestinian people has been destroyed and the Palestinian economy is in shambles. This has led to frustration and despair.

The problems facing the peace process are due mainly to Israel's reneging on its commitments reached in bilateral agreements, its ongoing occupation and settlement activities, and its disregard for international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions and for the bases and principles of the peace process, which are "land for peace", including Holy Jerusalem.

The crux of the problem in the occupied Palestinian territories today is the Israeli occupation. The practices of the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, constitute grave violations of resolutions of international legitimacy, as represented by the United Nations and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in those areas. It is inconceivable and unacceptable that the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, should turn a blind eye to these practices at a time when calls resonate from all directions for respect for human rights.

Security is a legitimate demand of all peoples of the Region. No one can deny any people the right to security. However, the security of one population cannot be realized at the expense of the security and rights of its neighbours and the murder and the assassination of their children, the demolition of their houses, the burning of their farms, the cutting off of their livelihoods, and their torture and starvation. Security can be achieved only in a situation based on legitimacy, justice and equality.

Consequently, Egypt has been persistent in calling on the international community to act firmly and quickly to push the parties to resume the peace process on a sound basis, and not emphasize the security aspects alone, without dealing with the crux of the problem: the need for peace based on justice, equality and respect for the full legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Egypt has emphasized the need to send observers to Palestine to help calm the situation within the framework of implementing the Mitchell recommendations, in order to reach negotiations on final status, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); the principles and guarantees of the Madrid Conference, particularly the principle of "land for peace"; and the agreements concluded between the two parties and guaranteed by world States concerned. Egypt also emphasizes that without the settlement of that dispute, which is the crux of the Israeli-Arab conflict, in a just and comprehensive manner, and without Israel's full withdrawal from the Syrian and Lebanese territories, the Middle East, strategically important to the whole world, will remain an area full of tension and instability that will in turn threaten the legitimate interests of those countries and all other countries concerned.

The present crisis has been triggered by a provocation related to a very special area of the occupied territory — Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. These are centrally important to the Arab and Muslim worlds, which do not accept the desecration of any of their holy places. These places have been transgressed, contrary to all heavenly and worldly laws. This represents an insult to the sentiments and rights of the millions of believers who have been taught to respect other people's faiths. We must reaffirm to the whole world, represented by the Council, the need for Israel to withdraw from all Arab occupied territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, and for Israel to respect the holy status of that city and to return it to the Palestinians to faithfully safeguard it.

I wish to emphasize that the recent bloody events confirm one fact: occupation has no future, however mighty the occupier, and that a just and balanced peace

is the basis for all stability and security in the region. Thus, we hope that the Israeli side will commit itself to the resolutions of international legitimacy and will work seriously to stop aggressive practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. We hope it will stop perpetrating violence against Palestinian institutions and property in East Jerusalem, particularly the illegal occupation of Orient House and the confiscation of its archives, which are an essential part of the history, heritage and memory of the Palestinian people.

Egypt still hopes that a peaceful, comprehensive and just settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict can be realized despite the setbacks caused by the Israeli side. Consequently, Egypt calls for Israeli conduct to be commensurate to and in conformity with all attempts to realize our objective: a firm, just and lasting peace. We hope that Israel will recognize this.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Egypt for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you every success in your work. I would also like to thank you for promptly agreeing to the request made by Palestine and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to hold this important meeting. I also cannot fail to take this opportunity to thank the representative of China, Ambassador Wang Yingfan, for his efficient and successful conduct of the Council's meetings last month.

The Council is convened today, for the third time in less than six months, to discuss the situation in Palestine in the light of increased Zionist aggression against the defenceless Palestinian people. The Council is meeting at a time when the Zionist entity, the occupying Power, is carrying out daily bombings of Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps using the most sophisticated weapons of destruction supplied by the United States, in particular F-16 fighter planes, attack helicopters, depleted uranium shells and toxic gas.

Against whom, exactly, is this merciless war machine pitted? The answer is against unarmed civilians, innocent women and children, throwing stones at the occupier and getting killed or injured by the hundreds and thousands. Civilian Palestinian dwellings are being bombarded and public buildings are being destroyed. The Palestinians are prevented from going home. They are driven from their houses. Evacuations and confiscations take place daily. Human rights are trampled underfoot. Operations of assassination and physical liquidation are committed against them. Moreover, they must face collective punishment, siege and isolation.

Despite the gravity of these crimes, which are being committed against the people of Palestine day after day and hour after hour, and despite the fact that 63 Palestinian letters of protest have been sent to the Security Council in the course of recent months to request prompt intervention to end Zionist terrorism, the Security Council has remained silent and powerless to intervene to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. The Council will continue to be powerless because its power is constrained by a tyrannical, arrogant and imperialist Power. I am referring to the United States of America, a country that provides military, moral and material cover for the crimes that the Zionist entity is committing against the people of Palestine and their children.

Unfortunately, the Council's policy of double standards in dealing with problems affecting the Islamic world in general and the Arab world in particular — and the Israeli occupation of Palestine above all — is a flagrant example of the injustice and ill-treatment suffered by the people of the third world, and more particularly by Muslim people. The death of Palestinian children and civilians and the death machines used by Israel for physical elimination have to date not been enough to wrest from the Council even a single declaration, however timid, condemning Zionist terrorism and deploring the acts committed by that neo-Nazi entity.

The President of the United States misses no opportunity to contact the criminal Zionists to offer them his condolences when a single Israeli soldier is killed by a hero of the Palestinian resistance. Yet, Palestinian children are killed, besieged and starved with the blessing of the United States, offered without remorse or morality. The United States loves to give others lessons in morality. It also claims to be devoted

to human rights, while shamelessly supporting the criminal Zionist occupying forces and calling on both parties, including the victims of aggression, to show the same restraint and moderation in order to save the peace process. But what peace are we talking about? What kind of neutral sponsor of peace is the United States speaking about? What we are saying here is that the resistance of the people of Palestine is a right that cannot be taken away. It is the legitimate right to self-defence, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in principles of international law.

True peace cannot be established by cajoling the occupier and imposing submissive solutions on vulnerable, occupied people. Peace can be established only at the cost of a bitter struggle; it must be torn out of the hands of the occupier by all means available. Such peace cannot be achieved through American mediation, because the United States sides with the occupier. It is armed struggle and the national intifada of the Palestinian people that will be able to wrest Palestinian rights from the aggressor. It is Palestinians who are daily watering the land of Palestine with their blood.

Allow me in this Chamber to hail the valiant, courageous people of Palestine, who are fighting Zionist and American imperialism every day and every hour. I pay true and sincere tribute to the Palestinian martyrs who without hesitation give their lives to defend their country. I also wish to salute those who resist in defence of their rights and their homeland.

The crimes committed by the Zionist occupation forces against defenceless, innocent Palestinian citizens have exceeded all the crimes previously committed by occupiers, as the annals of history show. Even the apartheid regime of South Africa, despite its brutality, would never have dared to use fighter planes against innocent, defenceless civilians, as the Israeli Zionists do when they shell peaceful Palestinian villages and towns.

The sadism of the Zionist occupiers and the barbarity of the occupation have succeeded in driving 68 per cent of the inhabitants of occupied Palestine from their homes since the beginning of the occupation in 1948. That is why there are 4.5 million Palestinian refugees waiting to return to their homes. The Zionist occupier is uprooting more than 150,000 olive trees from Palestinian land, in addition to confiscating all water resources from the Palestinians, who own the land and the water. The occupation forces, in plain view and with the knowledge of everyone, delight in detaining old people and sick people for many hours at inspection and transit points. Media reports tell of sick people dying at crossing points because of the severity of the wait and the humiliation and insults to which they are subjected during long waiting periods.

The international community, represented by States and Governments and by the United Nations itself, where we are meeting today, must work to restore the right of the Palestinian people to the return of all usurped territory, and the right of refugees to return to their homes, from which they had been chased by the Zionist usurpers. The Security Council today must shoulder its responsibility. It must adopt appropriate measures under the United Nations Charter to put an end to Zionist aggression, to make the occupation forces scrupulously respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949. We believe that the Security Council should respond on an emergency basis to Iraq's offer to devote not 1 million but 1 billion euros of its oil revenues to assisting its brothers in occupied Palestine, because they are in urgent need of economic assistance.

If we all agree that the acts committed by Zionism have led to the destruction of the economic infrastructure of Palestine, why then would the Council not allow Iraq to assist its Palestinian brothers in rebuilding their economic infrastructure? That would mean keeping silent in the face of suffering, accepting it and contributing indirectly to the continuation of this tragic situation.

In conclusion, I would like to say, so as not to waste more time in making speeches, that what we must do is to adopt specific, emergency measures to protect the Palestinian people from the murders and massacres that have been committed against it for more than 50 years and to enable it to regain its due rights. If that is not done, everyone — and I say everyone — will bear the responsibility, and regrets will then serve no purpose.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Iraq for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Oman. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first, Sir, to extend to you and to your friendly country, Colombia, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August. We are confident that your diplomatic expertise and your knowledge of international affairs will crown the Council's work with success and will assist it in attaining the objectives we all desire, foremost of which is to preserve international peace and security.

The Sultanate of Oman welcomes the holding of this emergency meeting of the Council to consider the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. We look forward to the time when the Council will shoulder its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter through the adoption of practical measures that would preserve peace, security and stability everywhere in the world, without discrimination, selectivity or double standards when dealing with the various issues brought before it.

After many previous attempts, the time has come for the Council to respond positively to the just demands of the Palestinian people by providing the necessary international protection to that people, which is a victim of oppression, isolation, repression and systematic assassination, all perpetrated against the elderly, women, children and other civilians, and by protecting it from the destruction of its institutions and the offices of the Palestinian Authority — something which the Israeli authorities had promised in 1996 that they would not do. This is not to mention the occupation of Orient House, which shows Israel's readiness to exacerbate the situation by increasing tension and by using its vast military arsenal, as everyone in the Council and in the entire international community knows.

That constitutes a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of international humanitarian law and of other relevant international instruments. This is all taking place following vigorous attempts by Israel to prevent Palestinian civilians from benefiting from these protections. The Security Council must therefore take immediate effective measures to provide them with such protections. Such action by the Council would surely result in the establishment of a machinery that would be binding on Israel.

Israel's persistent resort to collective punishment, blockade and killing should make one thing perfectly clear to the Council: that Israel does not care about international criticism and that it ignores all the agreements it has reached with the Palestinian side over the past decade. Israel has undermined hopes for peace in the region; therefore, the Council must no longer stand idly by as these crimes against humanity are daily committed in full view. We would ask whether Israel, as a Member of this Organization, is bound by international agreements, as other Member States are. Or is Israel exempt from such international instruments?

The Sultanate of Oman has been in the forefront of countries that believe in the peace process and that view it as a natural, civilized way to settle the Middle East conflict. We continue to believe that there is a glimmer of hope that it will be possible to return to the negotiating table. But that can take place only with manifest political will.

My Government welcomes the Egyptian-Jordanian proposal as a serious, promising initiative that ought to be considered. Along with the recommendations set out in the Mitchell report calling for a freeze on illegitimate settlements, that initiative could create a propitious atmosphere and pave the way for a return to the negotiating table by the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Today, the Palestinian people is in greater need of international protection than ever before, in view of its daily human suffering as a result of the ongoing Israeli military escalation. That is a legitimate request in line with the norms and principles of international legitimacy, and we make that request of the Security Council today. To allow these Israeli practices to continue unabated would cause the Middle East to descend into a cycle of violence and counter-violence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Oman for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I have every confidence that,

with your wisdom, skill and leadership, you will ably guide the Council in its consideration of the important and serious issue before it today with a view to bringing about peace with justice, for there can be no peace without justice.

My thanks go also to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, for his successful presidency last month.

The Palestinian question and its causes, its reasons and its consequences are well known to all, and have been well documented in the United Nations. There are dozens of relevant United Nations resolutions, and prominent among them are those adopted by the Security Council. As long as those resolutions remain unimplemented — and implementation includes the return of the Palestinian people to its land and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State — the problem will continue to pose a threat to international peace and security.

The core of the Palestinian problem is not the implementation of the Mitchell plan or the Tenet recommendations. It is the 34 years of continued occupation that have naturally led to the violence. The real sources of the violence are: the Zionist military occupation; the attempts by the forces of occupation to impose a fait accompli of occupation, settlement-building, expulsion and annexation and to create new facts on the ground to provide a rationale for expanding settlements, building new ones, seizing more land and expelling and displacing Palestinians; the refusal of the Tel Aviv regime to honour its commitments; and that regime's continuous violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

The problem is that the Palestinian people continues tenaciously to embrace its land and, in a variety of ways, to put forth its just demand for freedom and independence — a demand shared by all other occupied peoples. The problem is that this collides with the Zionist ambition to seize all Palestinian land and create a national homeland for the Jews in the whole of the promised land. The problem is that, like any other indigenous people, the Palestinians have sanctified the land of their forefathers, on which they have lived for thousands of years; like every other people, they can be immensely steadfast. There can be no sacrifice too great for them as they defend what remains of their land, despite the use of heavy artillery, F-16 aircraft, tanks, missiles and the latest military technology against unarmed civilians, towns, villages and other population centres. Stones thrown by children do not deserve a response by Apache aircraft and tanks, leading to mass killing which does not discriminate among women, children and babies. The result has been more than 600 Palestinians martyred, 100,000 wounded and 10,000 disabled, some of them blinded because the occupying forces are carefully trained to shoot their victims in the eyes.

The problem is that, in addition to this arbitrary killing, the forces of occupation regularly bulldoze Palestinian houses, farms and factories; seize Palestinian land and give it to new settlers; prevent Palestinians from working; and stop food, water and even medicine from reaching them.

The collective punishment against them is diversified and deftly implemented. That has led the Palestinians to resort to throwing stones and staging peaceful protests, which have been met with bullets, missiles, tanks and aircraft. Psychiatric hospitals and centres in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are filled with hundreds of Palestinian children suffering psychiatric disorders because of the Israeli raids, aggressions and brutalities that they see before them every day. UNICEF has noted that 1,300,000 Palestinian children are living in a state of terror and hypertension, suffering from an inability to concentrate due to their nightly suffering from nightmares and involuntary urination, because of the daily bombardment of their houses and their population centres. All these practices occur daily before the eyes of the whole world, which does nothing about it. This records the degree of man's cruelty towards his brothers.

Another problem is the racist laws implemented by the Zionist authorities in the occupied Palestinian land, among which is the right of return, which allows Jews everywhere in the world to immigrate and to reside in the occupied territories, while it does not allow the Palestinians born there, where their forefathers lived for thousands of years, to reside there. Such racist policies and practices have compelled them to emigrate, which has led to the establishment of a new apartheid regime in the Arab region. But this new apartheid regime does not just attempt to control the indigenous population, as was the case in South Africa, but also seeks to expel the Palestinian people and to seize their land and their property.

The problem is that the Zionists in Tel Aviv consider that the Zionist project will not be completed until a "Greater Israel" has been established on biblical land reaching from the Nile to the Euphrates, as symbolized by the two blue lines on the Israeli flag. Jews are therefore brought from everywhere in the world, whether they are 100 per cent Jewish or even 1 per cent Jewish. The important thing is to reinforce the demographic power of the Zionist entity and reinforce what they call their defences, while, in fact, these offensive forces carry out the Zionist dream of expansion.

The problem is that the brutal occupier wants both peace and land, and he will not be capable of getting both. Within the context of this horrible plan, we would like to point out that the Palestinian territory that was occupied in 1967 was called, in the terminology of the United Nations, "the occupied territories". The Jews complained, and it was later called "the territories". This was part of its campaign in every part of the world. Now they call this occupied land the "disputed territories".

One of the problems with respect to this question is that the Palestinians, the rightful owners, who have a continuous history of living in this land, are not allowed to enjoy their rights in a legal manner. Meanwhile, the usurpers, the Israelis, those who falsified history and created it through historical myths with the assistance of the major Powers. At a time when the international community is trying to bring war criminals who have committed crimes against humanity before the courts, we see that the war criminal of Sabra and Shatila, who is known to all of you, has returned to become another butcher in Gaza, Nablus, Hebron, Khan Younis, and many other Palestinian towns and cities. To justify this, they say he has changed. He has said to his press that he has not changed. In fact, he was a war criminal, and he is still a war criminal, and he will continue to be a war criminal.

The policy of organized assassinations and liquidations, which is implemented by the occupying Zionist forces against the symbols of resistance, and against unarmed civilians, is also a clear violation of article 32 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The death squads sent by the occupying forces to assassinate those they consider the leaders of the resistance to the continuous occupation act before the eyes of the world, in broad daylight and not at night. These are the brutal practices of the Tel Aviv regime, which considers itself above international law, while Palestinian prisoners are treated as guilty and not innocent. All forms of torture are practised against them clearly and explicitly. This criminal conduct, this continuous policy of terrorism, should be condemned by the international community and by the Security Council.

The occupying force has recently occupied Orient House and many of the buildings that represent Palestinian sovereignty in the occupied city. If the Security Council does not take immediate action against the occupation of Orient House, it means it is giving a green light to the occupying force to seize Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and all the churches and all quarters of Jerusalem, and to Judaize them. If the Council does not take any action now, it will contradict all previous action it has taken, actions that consider Jerusalem part of the occupied Palestinian territory, to which the norms of international law and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention apply.

In addition to the expulsion, the killing, the starving, the assassination and destruction, the Zionists have added another element to their racist practices. This is the racial and ethnic contempt and despite of Palestinians and Arabs. The British newspaper, *The Independent*, on 17 April, reported how Zionist leaders have described Arabs and Palestinians. Menachem Begin, the former Prime Minister, described Arabs as cattle walking on two legs, Rafael Eytan, the former chief of staff, called them "cockroaches", Barak calls them "crocodiles", Rehavam Zeevi, the present Minister of Tourism, calls them "scorpions", Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of the Shas party, and many other rabbis have provided a religious cover for Zionist practices and describe Palestinians and Arabs on one occasion as "snakes and serpents", and on another as "apes, pigs and ants" that should be exterminated. The paper pointed out that the racist regime in South Africa, during the days of apartheid, did not dare to describe the blacks in South Africa using racial epithets, but Tel Aviv does it openly and insolently. All the countries of the world curtailed relations with the apartheid regime. But the Tel Aviv regime, which had excellent relations with the apartheid regime in all spheres and, in particular, the military sphere, was not called to account owing to double standards, despite its racist practices and its continuous violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, a matter that contradicts the commitments of the countries of the world to defend human rights and

to suspend relations with any country that continues to violate those rights.

We have learned from the recent past that if a Zionist kills 20 Palestinians, he is immediately declared to be mentally disturbed. And they create a memorial for him to sanctify him, as occurred in the case of the criminal Goldstein at Hebron. But if a Palestinian kills Israelis that have seized his land and his honour, then he is considered a terrorist. This Zionist stereotyping is a matter that the Arab world has had to put up with for a long time, but everybody should understand that there is no difference between Arab blood and Jewish blood. Arab blood is not cheap water and Jewish blood is not expensive plasma. We are all equal.

The siege, the starvation, the killings, and the ethnic cleansing that are now taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories are marketed by the Zionist campaign as the appropriate response to Palestinian violence. In fact, what is happening now in the Palestinian territory is similar to the massacres, ethnic cleansing and mass expulsions that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, which required international humanitarian intervention. The failure of the international community and the Security Council to intervene in the occupied Palestinian territories and to provide protection to the Palestinians is a crime against humanity.

The hesitation of the Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, to intervene and protect the Palestinian people not only rewards the aggressor and enables it to continue its actions, but will encourage any future aggressor to violate international law in other parts of the world. That constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Some Zionist writers in the Zionist media try to justify the heinous crimes against the Palestinian people. In their articles, which are published regularly, they use words such as "beating", "expulsion", "attack", "destruction", "seizure" and "assassination" in a way that encourages Zionist stereotypes of people in the occupied Palestinian territories and promotes ethnic cleansing and the idea of finding a final solution in the form of extermination, transfer or expulsion.

Such writers continue to fill the media with strange articles and to tell lies, as if the Palestinians are the aggressors and the Zionists are the victims. They continue to defend the inhumane and racist policies implemented by the occupation forces against the Palestinian people — the displacement, starvation and humiliation — with impunity within the international community.

A brutal Jewish campaign was launched against a British journalist, Robert Fisk, who exposed Israeli practices in southern Lebanon and Palestine. Fisk pointed out that if a journalist in the West wants to escape criticism he must follow the rules prescribed by the Israelis — as if Israel is the party that is under siege and occupied and the Palestinians are the party engaging in violence and forcing their children to be killed. Nobody asks why Israeli soldiers kill so many children and young people. The Zionist organizations attack anybody who tries to point out what is happening in the occupied Arab territory.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was harshly criticized for telling the truth and for considering the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories a war crime under international humanitarian law. Human Rights Watch was likewise criticized, as well as Amnesty International, which was planning to introduce a comprehensive report at the Conference against racism to be held at the end of this month in Durban, South Africa. That report includes details about the inhumane racist practices to which the Palestinian people are subjected by the Zionist occupying forces on a daily basis in the occupied territories.

The Vienna-based organization, international friends of humanity, has condemned the attempts to kill Palestinian infants and children in cold blood. Even the French organization, Reporters Without Borders, has condemned the practices of the occupying forces against journalists who are trying to cover events and tragedies during the intifada in the occupied territories. In its report of last month, it placed responsibility for injuries to 30 journalists on the Israeli forces and called on the occupying forces to provide them with protection.

His Holiness the Pope has pointed out the importance of returning to the norms of international law, ending the seizure of land by force and emphasizing the right of people to self-determination and respect for the purposes and principles set out in the articles of the Charter.

On 10 June 2001, an Israeli journalist, Gideon Levy, wrote an article stating that Palestinian violence is the result of occupation. He said:

> "Who will state that the occupation is an act of violence, the most terrible of all, that terrorism is not only suicide bombers ...? ...That depriving a whole nation of freedom of movement and placing that nation in a prison is an act of violence more cruel than any in the past, and stirs a people to fight using whatever means it has? That the incitement in the Palestinian media is not that much worse that the incitement on Israeli television and radio? That the present war is first and foremost a war over Netzarim and Yitzhar, and that if they or all the settlements did not exist our situation would be immeasurably better? That the roots of Palestinian terrorism have to be sought in the Israeli occupation and not in the Palestinians' genes?"

Israeli journalist Uri Avnery wrote in April this year:

> "The mighty Israeli army has not succeeded in breaking the backbone of the uprising. It has tried everything: gunship helicopters, tanks, cannons, liquidations, destruction of whole neighbourhoods, closure, siege, demolition of homes, uprooting of plantations — and ... the Palestinians continue to be stand on their feet and fight."

He continued:

> "The Sharon-Peres Government enjoys the overwhelming support of the United States, which provides it with arms and money and exercises its veto in the Security Council on Israel's behalf ... a European diplomat has said that Israel is in practice the fifth permanent member of the Security Council with the veto power."

The forces of hegemony in the international community have given the Zionist entity great powers and continue to overlook international law; they have not called it to account. Arab countries are still subjected to cruel sanctions by the Security Council on the basis of accusations that have not been proved, yet the Israeli regime continues for half a century to violate international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

In an earlier report, the Secretary-General called for the protection of the weak and the innocent from the harm that results from armed conflict and for the development of strategies to achieve those objectives and to punish all those who violate international law. The international community responded in the case of Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor, but it has done nothing when faced with the tragedies of the people in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Security Council last March should have abided by its responsibilities under the Charter and intervened to protect the Palestinian people from the butchers and to stop the bloodshed. But the only super-Power in the world, which is supposed to be an honest broker, stopped it from doing so and has given the occupying force a green light and a licence to kill children and other innocent people. If we want to put an end to the volatile situation in the region, and if the Security Council wants to maintain its credibility, the international community and the Security Council must intervene quickly before it is too late to save the situation and to save the occupied Palestinian people from their executioners.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

I would like to say to the members of the Council and the other delegations that there are more speakers on my list. Given the lateness of the hour, at the end of this long day, with the consent of the members of the Council I would like to suspend meeting now. It will resume tomorrow, Tuesday, 21 August, at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 6.55 p.m.